SPECIAL
COLLECTIONS
DOUGLAS
LIBRARY

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
AT KINGSTON

KINGSTON ONTARIO CANADA

MORE REASONS

FOR A

REFORM in PARLIAMENT

Contained in Letters to the following Perſons, *viz.*

To the PRESIDENT of the Society for the Relief and Discharge of Persons imprisoned for Small Debts:

To Mr. JUSTICE ASHHURST, on his Charge to the Grand Jury:

To the SECRETARY of the Association for preserving Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers:

And to THOMAS BULL, in Answer to his Letter to his BROTHER JOHN.

"In a *free* State, *every Man*, who is ſuppoſed a free Agent, ought to "be in ſome meaſure his own governor; *and therefore a branch at leaſt* "*of the Legiſlative Power ſhould reſide in the whole Body of the People.*"

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JAMES RIDGWAY,

YORK-STREET, ST. JAMES'S-SQUARE.

1793.

(Price Threepence, or Twenty Shillings per Hundred.)

AC 911. 1093. B64

MORE REASONS

FOR A

Reform in Parliament, &c.

To the Preſident or Chairman of the Society for the Relief and Diſcharge of Perſons impriſoned for Small Debts.

SIR,

I BEG leave to trouble you with the ſentiments of an individual on the nature and ends of the Society of which you have the honour to be Preſident; and although this letter bears an anonymous ſignature, I truſt that it will not, on that account, have leſs attention paid to it by your truly humane and patriotic body.

When ſchemes or plans are ſuggeſted (though by an humble and obſcure member of the community), which have reaſon and truth for their baſis, and irrefutable arguments for their ſupport, though they ſhould never be adopted, they at leaſt merit notice; and thanks are certainly due to the perſon who propoſes them for the uprightneſs of his intentions.

I have

I have not the ſmalleſt doubt, ſir, but it is the ardent wiſh of your ſociety to do all the good they poſſibly can; on this ground, therefore, I ſhall ſubmit to their candour and good ſenſe the ſentiments which will follow in this letter; and I ſhall do it with more confidence, as I know from my acquaintance with the conſtitution, and the experience which I have had in the profeſſion and practice of the common law of this country, for a conſiderable number of years paſt, that I am not altogether unqualified for the taſk; and I truſt I ſhall prove to them, that inſtead of applying medicines to the diſeaſed and lingering patient, they may in time be able to remove the diſeaſe itſelf. The exiſting laws in this country, which authoriſe impriſonment for debt, are partial, vicious, and ineffectual: they are partial, in as much as the makers and framers of thoſe laws are exempt from their operation; they are vicious, becauſe they allow individuals to gratify their private malice and revenge, in the detaining their debtors in priſon even for life; and they are ineffectual, by reaſon, that both creditor and debtor are generally in a worſe ſituation when the debtor is diſcharged from, than when he firſt went into priſon.

Impriſonment for debt is likewiſe rendered more oppreſſive by the very heavy and grievous coſts attendant thereon, which very frequently amount to more than the debt, and are often indeed the ſole cauſe of a man's being detained in priſon.

The lawyers have in general been ſuppoſed to be the ſole partakers of this abominable, this diſgraceful plunder; but the fact is, that the government at large, together with ſubordinate placemen and penſioners, enjoy at leaſt an equal

ſhare

ſhare of the emoluments with the practitioners of the law. The enormous ſtamp-duties which are impoſed upon almoſt every law proceſs ; the prepoſterous and uſeleſs fees of office, for which there is not the ſhadow of a pretence, and laſtly, the more grievous and expenſive fees of a priſon, are an outrage upon liberty and juſtice.

But how can we reaſonably expect, that laws ſhould be either juſt or equal, or that evils like thoſe which I have hinted at ſhould be redreſſed, as long as the people are unjuſtly deprived of their repreſentation in Parliament. If the repreſentation is partial, ſo alſo will be the laws ; if the members are venal and corrupt, then will the laws be not only partial but oppreſſive : and all the relief which a ſociety like yours can afford to perſons under the oppreſſion of ſuch laws, will be trifling and inſignificant. Your applications are levelled at the effect, whereas they ſhould be directed to the cauſe, which, could you remove, the effect would ceaſe : the evil is ſo deeply rooted, and the ſyſtem become ſo depraved and corrupt, that nothing ſhort of a total renovation can poſſibly produce all thoſe deſirable ends, which enlightened and liberal men in general, as well as thoſe of your ſociety ſo ardently wiſh for. The only method to obtain that renovation is for the people, of all denominations and deſcription, to unite with firmneſs and ardour, in patriotic ſocieties, for the purpoſe of procuring a fair and equal repreſentation in Parliament.

Be aſſured, that whenever that great and deſirable end ſhall be obtained, your ſociety will have nothing further to do ; the good of the whole will then be provided for by the whole, inconteſtibly proving the truth of the very ancient

ancient maxim, "Omne majus continet in ſe minus."

With the greateſt reſpect and eſteem for the ſociety and the moſt heartfelt wiſhes, for the freedom and happineſs of Engliſhmen in particular, and of mankind in general, I beg leave to ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your very obedient Servant,

September 5th, 1792.

PHILANTHROPOS.

LETTER

LETTER II.

To Sir William Henry Aſhburſt, one of the Juſtices of the Court of King's-Bench.

SIR,

THOUGH an humble and obſcure individual of the community, permit me to thank you for your recent well-timed addreſs to the grand jury. —Like the wiſe and judicious proclamation, it will tend to promote that ſpirit of diſcuſſion, and free *enquiry*, which, happily for the people of this country, is gone forth, and which will give them ſome ideas of the *bleſſings* of our conſtitution (if we have one). Amongſt theſe *bleſſings*, I obſerve, you (characteriſtically enough) particularize law, meaning, I preſume, law in general, including, no doubt, every ſpecies of law which is handed down to us, either by the obſcure, uncertain, arbitrary, and equivocal term of *cuſtom*, or that other, which, though written, is, thank God, no leſs obſcure and uncertain; and, to the glory of this country, forms a maſs of no leſs than 15 folio volumes—to ſay nothing of the enormous collections of caſes adjudged, and not adjudged, abridgements, digeſts, reports, vade mecums, dictionaries, grammars, treatiſes, &c. You, ſir, having been brought up to the honourable trade of the law, muſt, no doubt, feel great uneaſineſs at the thoughts of its being ſimplified, and

and made intelligible to the meaneſt capacity (a conſequence which would neceſſarily follow from a reform here); but what is moſt to be regretted by all lawyers, and other true lovers and admirers of our happy conſtitution is, that in such a caſe, juſtice would be more impartially adminiſtered, at a much leſs expence than it now is, and litigation, oppreſſion, chicane, and fraud, the very prominent and pleaſing features of the preſent ſyſtem, would be annihilated.

As your addreſs ſeemed to hint at the licentiouſneſs of the preſs; and as you, no doubt, mean to purſue the ſubject further, it may not be altogether unintereſting for you to know, that ſince the iſſuing of the proclamation, no leſs than 130,000 copies of that moſt infamous and daring libel upon monarchy and ariſtocracy, called the "Rights of Man," written by Thomas Paine, have been bought by the infatuated people of this happy and, who, with grief I ſpeak it, are determined, at length, to read and judge for themſelves! This muſt undoubtedly be prevented; what I, therefore, ſhall moſt earneſtly requeſt of you now, is, that you will, with all the zeal and ability for which you are ſo remarkable, write a refutation of the work above alluded to—the arguments will ſoon be controverted by ſo able a judge as yourſelf, and you will derive more laſting fame from ſo extraordinary a performance, than any you can poſſibly gain from paſſing ſentence on the printers and publiſhers of the work,

I have the honour to be

Your's &c. &c.

ONE OF THE MULTITUDE.

LETTER

LETTER III.

To the Secretary of the Aſſociation for preſerving Liberty and Property againſt Republicans and Levellers.

SIR,

ALTHOUGH a perfect ſtranger to yourelf, and to the men who compoſe the aſſociation, to which you have publicly announced your name as ſecretary, I ſhall proceed to offer you a few obſervations on the inſtitution. As to who or what the perſons are who compoſe the ſociety, I, for myſelf, care little about, becauſe I think that every man in the ſtate, although he may have no property, has nevertheleſs imperſcriptible, unalienable, indefeaſible rights, ſuch, for inſtance, as the right of repreſentation—a right which all men have, but which few enjoy—a right that no men, however baſe and corrupt he may be, can alienate; for ſuch an alienation would be, according to the eternal and immutable law of juſtice, *nudum pactum*, and conſequently void *in ſe*. It ſeems therefore to me, that your ſociety have rather miſtaken their ground.—They ſtile themſelves to the public,

" An

" An aſſociation for *preſerving* liberty and property againſt republicans and levellers." They at their outſet have gone too far; ſo far indeed, that I much queſtion whether they have not over-reached themſelves. Their eagerneſs in the good cauſe in which they have embarked, has tempted them to make aſſertions which they will find it difficult to prove. I take it to be logically true, that before any man can poſſibly *preſerve* a thing, he muſt be in the *actual poſſeſſion* of it——Where then is the liberty which your Aſſociation, either collectively or individually, poſſeſs? Do they poſſeſs it by the payment of exorbitant taxes—the neceſſity, propriety, or juſtice of which they have never conſented to? If ſuch is the liberty they poſſeſs, and ſuch the liberty they wiſh to *preſerve*, how idle and how unneceſſary is the object of their Aſſociation! for what ſet of men in the country would dream of depriving them of ſo valuable a *poſſeſſion?* As to the ſecondary object of the Aſſociation, viz. the preſervation of their *property*, there certainly ſeems to be ſomething more like a pretence for it, for as moſt of the property of the Aſſociation is to be found in the Red Book in the liſt of Placemen and Penſioners, it is very neceſſary, that *ſuch kind of property* ſhould be preſerved even *vi et armis*, ſhould the temper of the times require it, and which (by the bye) is not altogether improbable. I cannot but applaud the Aſſociation for giving ſo early a proof of their *patriotiſm* in the choice of their chairman, a man, who, on account of his poſſeſſing immenſe property, being totally free from ariſtocratical influence, and not holding any place under the preſent Government (though

(though a very virtuous one) is the more to be depended on by the public at large, as well as by thoſe who have thought fit to exalt him into the chair.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

No Pensioner.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

The Anſwer of John Bull to his Brother Thomas.

DEAR BROTHER,

I HAVE received your Letter, entitled, "One Penny-worth of Truth," which I think very dear, when I conſider the contents. It grieves me much to obſerve, that your ſentiments are totally altered; you formerly uſed to be a true friend to liberty, but it ſeems now, Thomas, that you are the advocate, and I fear, the *penſioned advocate* for Deſpotiſm: You appear to be much offended at the French, for telling us, "*All mankind are equal*;" and you ſay it is a lie—but I ſay, Thomas, it is true, for all men are equal in their *rights*, and ſo they are in the eye of the law; but the French have never ſaid, as you have artfully ſaid for them, that all men are equal, or ought to be equal in their properties or poſſeſſions, becauſe they know very well that all men are not, and never can be, equal in talents and abilities.

Our father uſed to tell us, Thomas, that all power was derived from the people, and that no government was lawful that was not founded on their conſent; but I am ſorry to find that you have deſerted theſe principles, and have adopted the old exploded doctrine, that Kings are the Lord's Anointed, and hold their crowns independent of the will of the people. If our anceſtors had

had held this doctrine, there would have been no Revolution in 1688; nor would the present family have been upon the throne. Furthermore, Thomas, if you had held this doctrine in the year 1745, your head would probably have been upon Temple-Bar.

Your accounts of French affairs are evidently taken from newspapers, which are notoriously in the pay of their enemies; but I, Thomas, who have just arrived from Paris, know a little more about the matter; and it would not be amiss, let me tell you, if you and I, and all the family of the Bulls, were to behave civil to the French, for I am sure they are very civil and hospitable to all of our family in France. According to your ideas the *people* are a mob; if such is your idea of the *sovereign people*, may I be one of the mob as long as I live; and I do assert, "there can be no lawful Government but what the people make." What you say about Tom Paine is a lie; he never declared, that when he had made Revolutions against the Kings upon earth, he would try his hand at a *Revolution in Heaven*. That he has made revolutions in men's minds is very certain; but it would have done you more credit, if you had refuted the author, and not abused the man. You constantly couple kings with God, and attempt to prove their divine origin from Scripture; but why did not you give us "the words of the Lord unto the people, that asked of him a king," *Sam.* i. *cap.* 8.—I'll tell you why, Thomas, because it did not suit your purpose. As to your anointing and your oil, that's too stale a joke for the present day. I do not wonder at your abusing the Presbyterians, because it is well known you are a high churchman, and (as your letter to me sufficiently proves) a rank tory; but when you say "our National Debt

Debt, for which we are now paying such heavy taxes, was doubled by the troubles in America, all brought on us from the beginning by the dissenters, there and *here*, you assert a most wicked and malicious falsehood, which the history of the time sufficiently proves; you know very well, or at least you ought to know, that the dissenters uniformly reprobated that war as impolitic and unjust; they maintained, not that kings exist by divine right, but that no people ought to be taxed, but by themselves, that is to say, by their representatatives freely and fairly chosen; where then were the representatives of America? Were they to be found in the House of Commons? No; for they represent not one hundredth part of the people of England.* Were they to be found in

* At a time when *interested individuals* are confederating with the *sole* view to perpetuate abuses, and to drown the voice of the people in their cry for a Parliamentary Reform, there is a peculiar propriety in reminding the public of the *former* conduct of the *virtuous* and *patriotic* William Pitt.—"On the Seventh of May, 1783, the day after the call of the "House, Mr. William Pitt made his promised motion respecting the Re- "form of Parliamentary Representation. As the mode of proceeding "by a Committee, proposed last year, had formed one of the prin- "cipal objections against the Reform itself, he thought it more advi- "sable to bring forward some *specific* propositions: these were,

"I. That it was the opinion of the House, that measures were highly "necessary to be taken for the future prevention of bribery and "expence at elections."

"II. That for the future, when the majority of voters for any Bo- "rough shall be convicted of gross and notorious corruption be- "fore a select Committee of the House, appointed to try the "merits of any election, such Borough should be disfranchised, "and the minoity of voters, not so convicted, should be enti- "tled to vote for the County in which such Borough should be "situated."

"III. That an addition of Knights of the Shire, and of Represenla- "tives of the Metropolis, should be added to the state of Repre- "sentation." He left the number for future discussion, but said "he should propose *One Hundred*.

Vide Annual Register for 1783.

the

the Houſe of Lords? No; for they repreſent none but themſelves. Were they to be found in the King? No; for he, according to your doctrine, repreſents none but God! It is the opinion, Thomas, of all but high churchmen and tories, that if the people of England had been fairly and equally repreſented in Parliament, the war with America would not have happened, and we ſhould have eſcaped 140 millions of debt, which would undoubtedly have been a *bleſſing*. But how comes it you have been ſo ſparing of the enumeration of the *bleſſings* we enjoy; you have made no mention of the Game Laws, Exciſe Laws, Tithes, Teſt Acts, and various other *bleſſings*, too numerous to mention at preſent, but about which I will be more explicit in my next; and ſhall at preſent be content with ſubſcribing myſelf (in the ſincere wiſh for your ſpeedy reformation),

Your affectionate Brother,

JOHN BULL.

FINIS.

ADVERTISEMENT

THE foregoing Letters are all of them written by the ſame Author, under different Signatures, and have already made their appearance in ſeveral of the Public Papers; they would not have been offered to the Public, in the ſhape they now are, had not the Author been ſolicited to Publiſh them together, by ſeveral of his Friends, whoſe favourable opinion of them, has been a ſufficient gratification to him for his efforts in the great cauſe of Parliamentary Reform.

1ſt January, 1793.